

Arts in the Parks

Harmonie State Park Property Profile

Website: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2981.htm>

Key Messages/Stories:

- Harmonie State Park is located on the banks of the Wabash River in northwestern Posey County. The property began as a State Recreation Area in 1966 with a 700 acre donation from the family of Elmer E. Elliot, to provide a State Park near Evansville. Dedicated as a State Park in 1978, Harmonie is now 3,465 acres.
- Prior to becoming a State Park, the property was used primarily for farming and grazing. The northern part of the park where the office and pool are located used to be a melon farm, and the southern area of the park was mostly livestock pasture. The central portion of the park was roamed by scientists in the mid 1800s to study biology and geology. Oil was discovered in the area and has been drawn from the property since the early 1900s. There are still several active oil wells on the property today.
- New Harmony is a small historic town approximately 2 miles north of Harmonie State Park. During the early part of the 19th century, New Harmony was the site of two attempts to establish Utopian communities. The first town of Harmonie was founded in 1814 by the Harmonie Society, a group of Separatists from the German Lutheran Church. The Harmonists sold their town and lands to Robert Owen, a Welsh-born industrialist and philosopher in 1825 and the name was changed to New Harmony. Owen endeavored to create a society based on free education and the abolition of social classes.
- Today, residents and tourists enjoy the town's opportunities for dining, shopping for antiques, visiting art galleries, and admiring the quaint surroundings where even the architecture pays tribute to a blend of the past and future. New Harmony has become known for its many gardens, sculptures, restored historic buildings and public spaces designed for quiet contemplation and spiritual renewal.
- Harmonie State Park encompasses two nature preserves; the Lower Wabash and Harmonie Hills. The northern half of the property is home to rolling hills, marshy bottom lands and sloughs created by flowing and flooding of the Wabash River. The southern half contains deep ravines crafted from glacial melt-water and tiny but relentless underfit streams. Visitors to Harmonie are treated with striking views of the river, heavily forested valleys and abundant wildlife.

Top Five Things to Do:

- Camping and mountain biking are the top two activities at Harmonie. The park also has an Olympic size swimming pool with a two-story waterslide.
- 10 miles of hiking trail wind through the property, along with 16 miles of mountain bike trail that is open to hikers as well. The sandy soil often washes out from underneath trees along the small underfit streams, leaving behind stunning arrays of roots to admire and photograph.
- The nature center is open from April to October.
- Edmunds Cemetery is located near the youth tent area; a short hike to a small family plot from the mid 1800s.



- The park has 8 miles of day-use equestrian trail, but use is minimal.

Lodging: Harmonie State Park has 200 electric campsites and eleven family cabins. The town of New Harmony has the New Harmony inn; a modern hotel with dining and conference facilities as well as an enclosed pool.

General visitor profile: campers and cabin guests mainly from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri, primarily on weekends; day-users for mountain biking, swimming, horseback riding, fishing, picnics and hiking, YMCA groups for swimming and picnicking in summer.

Potential arts venues:

- Small stage in the campground with electrical service and lighting. Lawn seating for approximately 200.
- Various shelter houses:
 - All shelters are open, with an under-roof capacity of 40-50. Four shelters have electricity and lights.
- Nature Center:
 - Program room amenities? – none
 - Outdoor amphitheater: amenities? None at this time. A project is in progress to construct a 30x50 shelter near the nature center for outside programming. The project is unlikely to be completed in 2015. Possible completion in 2016.
 - Due to the location of the nature center in the center of the campground, visitation by non-campers is minimal

Visitation in FY2014: approximately 55,000, based on an average of 3 persons per daily admission or camping registration.

Nearby Communities: New Harmony, Mt. Vernon, Evansville, Carmi, IL, Grayville, IL

Please email questions to Artsintheparks@dnr.IN.gov.

